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SCHOOLSCAPES

WORKING TOGETHER
TO INSTRUCT, SOCIALIZE AND PROVIDE QUALIFICATIONS

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Québec

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he reform is now underway in Secondary Cycle One, and will be implemented in Secondary Cycle Two starting September 2007. Many teachers have questions about the new options that will be offered to students. In order to boost student motivation, to encourage students to stay in school, and to prepare those who will enter the labour market upon finishing secondary school, the artisans and designers of the *Basic school regulation* and the Québec Education Program saw the need to provide more diversified paths in Cycle Two. Students will now choose between general education and applied general education. For others, the best choice will be one of the programs offered under the work-oriented training path. The guidance-oriented approach will help students understand the choices available and make connections to their own interests, values and aspirations. The diversification of paths is in keeping with the three aims of the QEP: empowerment, construction of identity, and construction of world-view. This requires autonomy and the freedom to choose, based on an accurate perception of situations and greater self-knowledge. Recently, *Schoolscapes* met with Ministère coordinators to discuss this next phase of the reform. This issue of *Schoolscapes* features articles that shed light on these new programs and approaches.

In addition, this issue contains an article on the literary camps held during the summer as part of the *And what are you reading?* action plan.

Enjoy your reading!

Colette Boucher

The Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant (COFPE) has just published a brief entitled "*The Internship Practicum in the School Setting: New Horizons to Explore.*" The brief contains 29 recommendations in the following areas: frameworks regulating teacher training; responsibilities of the various players in schools during teaching practicums; development, organization, evaluation and recognition of training given to teachers and to mentoring teachers; recognition of the diversity and complexity of the teaching profession.

The brief is available on the COFPE Web site:
<www.cofpe.gouv.qc.ca>

In its next issue, *Schoolscapes* will feature articles related to the Provincial Meeting on the Education Reform that took place at the end of October in Laval. The theme of this meeting was *Steering Change: A Question of Leadership and Support.* We will also cover aspects of the Training Session for Resource Persons, held at the end of November under the theme of *Planning Learning and Evaluation.*

By Gilbert Maisan

Thérèse Bouffard and a team from the Université du Québec à Montréal recently carried out a study on the perceptions that teachers, teacher training students and students in Elementary 2, 4 and 6 have of the strategies used in class to improve motivation. Twenty-six schools from three Québec school boards participated.

Conducted in two phases, this study first enabled researchers to design and validate a questionnaire on motivational strategies, such as the recognition of effort, the use of punishment and the promotion of autonomy. For this first phase, 162 elementary school teachers and 452 teacher training students were surveyed.

In the second phase, researchers compared how teachers and elementary school students perceived the use of these strategies, so as to make connections between variables related to motivation, perceived support and academic achievement. For this second phase of data collection, 1508 students and 94 teachers participated.

The research results show that students and teachers have similar assessments of the various strategies, although the younger students gave a more positive evaluation to most of the strategies. The study also shows that students' perception of the support received from their teachers has a determining effect on their motivation. As for academic achievement, the student's feeling of personal efficacy plays a more important role than the other aspects analyzed in the study.

To find out more, please read journalist Frances Moyle's interview with Thérèse Bouffard on the the following page.

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By Frances Mayle

Motivational Strategies Used by Teachers and Their Correlations with the Motivational Profile of Elementary School Students

Thérèse Bouffard, a researcher in the psychology department at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), recently conducted a study entitled, "Les stratégies de motivation des enseignants et leurs relations avec le profil motivationnel d'élèves du primaire." What makes the study original is the fact that the strategies used by teachers to motivate students were examined not only from the teacher's point of view, but also from that of the students. Bouffard got her inspiration for this study from an American researcher, Susan Bobbitt Nolen, who was the first to come up with the idea of surveying children on the strategies that worked in motivating them to learn. Bouffard recalls that when she saw the results of the American study, she thought, "Wow! It's almost simplistic, but it's brilliant!" She then decided to explore this avenue in greater depth, using a large sample of children in different school cycles, divided into those who liked school and those who did not. "Usually," she explains, "we don't ask children about their perceptions of things. We take it for granted that we, as adults, know how to teach, and that students will appreciate the practices we implement."

As explained in Bouffard's research paper, academic success depends on internal factors tied to students' individual characteristics, and on external factors tied to characteristics of their family environment, their school environment and the teaching practices to which they are exposed. Some strategies are used to stimulate motivation, which is critical for academic commitment and success. The most important aspects of this motivation are the student's sense of self-efficacy (also called perceptions of competency), his or her learning goals and the value that the student places on a given subject. These three components make up what is called the student's motivational profile.

The development of the characteristics that form this motivational profile was the central theme of this research study. Bouffard explains that the motivational profile is not something set in stone for the child's entire life; rather, it is fluid, changing and variable. "Not so long ago, people would talk about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. That view has become obsolete in current theories of motivation. The motivational profile is a dynamic construct. It is made up of several different variants, such as the subject at hand and the student's own characteristics."

For the study, the team targeted eight strategies that it considered directly linked to personal motivation. One interesting finding was that those deemed useful by the teachers—such as strategies focusing on autonomy and cognitive stimulation—were are also deemed useful by the students. Others, such as negative emulation, which teachers declared ineffective for improving the motivation of students who like school and detrimental for those who do not like school, were also rated negatively by the children.

One strategy that received a "lukewarm" rating from teachers and students alike had to do with effort. According to the research paper, this notion is not quite clear for students, who associate the need to work hard with a lack of intelligence; therefore, a student who has difficulty at school may see no point in working hard. This observation, coming during the education reform when emphasis is being placed

on the learning process and the importance of working hard, is disturbing. The paper suggests that "teachers themselves need to be convinced of the role of effort; the notion of working hard should be related to real content and not simply associated with the sweat expended in performing an activity." (Free translation)

In the late 1980s, a study of Elementary 6 students demonstrated that the combined support provided by the student's teacher, parents and friends had a positive effect on his or her interest in school in general, and that the perception of the teacher's support had a direct effect on the student's interest in classroom activities. In this respect, the links between student judgments on the strategies used, the perception of support received from teachers, and the motivational profile lead to the conclusion that perceived support is systematically linked to the three components of the motivational profile, at all three school levels studied, both among students who like school and those who don't. Therefore, more than any judgment on the usefulness of the strategies employed, it is the student's perception of the quality of his or her relationship with the teacher that matters.

According to Bouffard, the key finding that emerged from her research paper was the importance of children's perceptions of teacher support. All the results of the study clearly demonstrate that teacher support is the most important variable. In Elementary 2, teacher support is the primary variable explaining the sense of self-efficacy, both among children who like school and those who don't. In the latter group (children who don't like school), 30 per cent of the value granted to a subject comes from the perception they have of the teacher's support. In Elementary 4, the first variable that emerges in relation to self-efficacy is again teacher support, in both categories of students. Among the older students, although other variables play an increasing role, teacher support remains strong.

Whether or not children like school does, of course, affect their perception of the teacher's support, but this variable remains crucial nonetheless. Even students who don't like school can tell when their teacher wants to help them.

The support relationship is important at all levels of education, not just elementary school. As supervisor to a dozen PhD students, Bouffard says she has to know what they are thinking, feeling and striving to accomplish, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and how she can best help them. It's important for her students to see that she's paying attention to their progress and development.

"The variations in performance coincide with the variations in the sense of self-efficacy," Bouffard notes, with respect to performance predictors. "The more effective students feel, the better they succeed—even beyond their real capacities."

To illustrate this statement, she referred to a study currently underway on what is called the illusion of incompetence. Despite high or fully sufficient competencies, the perception of being good or not can lead to catastrophe. Children with an illusion of incompetence, she explains, experience a lot of anxiety during evaluations.

"They'll write the correct answer, and then erase it. They feel like impostors who will one day be discovered. They say the mask will fall and people will see what they're really worth. The slightest obstacle sends them into passive mode. They withdraw from the task: they do the minimum required because they are convinced that they don't have the resources to succeed. Then, what follows is a matter of protecting their self-image. They find all kinds of external reasons for not succeeding: they say the task was boring, or that they couldn't do their homework because they forgot their books at school. Because if they try hard and then do not succeed, the feeling of failure will be even worse."

Inversely, some children have an illusion of competence. And that, she says, is a precious asset—because it is this good opinion that makes them work hard. Over time, these children succeed even better than what was predicted by the results of tests measuring their capacity. Because they are convinced they will succeed, they know their efforts are worthwhile. "What we think of ourselves is the most crucial variable in how a human being operates. And I'm speaking from experience: if I've come this far, it's because although I had feelings of incompetence, I was always convinced of the value of effort, that if I worked hard I would succeed. And I did. Working hard is always worthwhile in the long run."*

According to Bouffard, most young teachers discover the motivational aspects of learning through coaching and practice. "Fortunately, teachers are working more and more in teams. These notions, which are at the heart of learning, should really be the subject of a mandatory course during initial teacher training."

Without wanting to preach, and without looking down on the didactic aspect of teacher training, she believes that a much more fundamental aspect is neglected: a good understanding of the affective, psychological and motivational characteristics of the learner. Her PhD supervisor, Adrien Pinard,** always said that one should never forget the importance of art and sensitivity. And to Bouffard, that matters as much as didactic competencies.

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* This is one of the differences, although small, that can be observed between boys and girls: in order to succeed, boys place more value in abilities, while girls place more value in effort.

** Adrien Pinard (1916-1998) was an emeritus professor at the Université de Montréal, where he taught psychology for 37 years. He was also a professor and researcher at UQAM from 1981 to 1989. In 1988, this university awarded him the title of emeritus professor as well. Pinard was internationally recognized for his work in the area of intelligence development and metacognition.

By Sylvie Arcouette

It is still only the beginning of the school year, but already the Cycle One students at Joli-Bois school in Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier greet their English specialist with an enthusiastic "Miss Nathalie, English today! Yes! Yes! Yes!" when they see her in the hall of their small school. A teacher for the last six years, Nathalie Côté says that "the students really like it" and "they're always trying to speak English."

The story is similar in Val-d'Or. "I'm surprised at the extent of the results. These children got right on board!" says Manon Jetté. Although she has had many groups of students since teaching English at Sainte-Lucie school, this is her first time teaching students this young. "It's as if the Elementary 1 students don't differentiate between speaking English or French to me. They're in a phase where they're becoming familiar with the process of learning a second language."

Placed in a reassuring context where they're not expected to form complete sentences, students develop their own repertory of words to express simple messages. Anne Millette, coordinator for the ESL programs, explains that 6- and 7-years-olds are not embarrassed to express themselves in rudimentary English because, unlike 8- or 9-yeard-olds, they enjoy the act of trying. Jetté's experience confirms this statement. "It would be much harder with my Elementary 3 students."

The program aims to make the language come alive by exposing students to authentic audio models. They listen to songs, nursery rhymes or stories intended for native English speakers their age. Réjane Cascarano, coordinator of the pilot project, notes that "if students are sufficiently immersed in the language, they will reproduce the accent, phrasing and original intonations." She is fascinated to see just how well students this young can decode and decipher the structure of a text without being taught any of these notions explicitly.

Because students in Elementary Cycle One need to stay active, teaching materials were chosen according to the physical response they elicit in the learner. "What happens in the body is inscribed into memory," Millette explains. "And we've discovered what works: anything that calls on the learner's imagination, creativity, world of fantasy or playful side." For the stories, educators choose texts with repetitive passages—something children this age find very appealing.

The classes are conducted in English from start to finish. Students must concentrate on hints provided by the teacher's gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice, and by the images illustrating what they hear, to be able to decode the message. Each class must contain an active period where, for example, the children recite and mime a nursery rhyme, or use gestures to act out the words of a song.

A period for consolidating what they've learned then follows, during which the song or nursery rhyme continues to play in the background. This activity requires less attention. Children can then colour, cut out or paste into an album the visual representation of the new song, nursery rhyme or story, as well as a few key words. "It's an activity children can also do at home with their parents, since children in the first year of Cycle One don't know how to read yet," Côté explains. "So we're not trying to get them to read English, yet, either; that's not the goal."

Each class ends with a self-evaluation. The idea is to "help the children understand how they learn and the attitudes or abilities they are developing," says Millette. Do they think they did any "Super Speaking" or "Super Listening"? If so, they colour in the figure with the big smile. Otherwise, they might choose the figure that is smiling less.

All four people interviewed emphasized that teaching English in Elementary Cycle One does not in any way interfere with reading and writing French. Cascarano explains: "We asked the homeroom teachers of the participating pilot groups if they had noticed any negative effects, and their responses were unanimous: there are none." Like Millette, she deplores the fact that the program is not known by the general public and that what we hear in the media is based on misconceptions.

The report on the first year of experimentation was to be tabled at the provincial meeting for school administrators on October 26. A seven-minute DVD showing teachers and students in action will be distributed along with the report.

In addition to teaching English as a second language at an earlier age in the French-speaking sector, the new *Basic school regulation* will increase the time allotted for ESL, arts and physical education from 3 hours to 4 and a half hours. The governing boards will be responsible for the allocation of these additional teaching hours according to the needs of each school.

Since the new *Basic school regulation* will come into effect starting September 2006, the Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire (DFTPS) has already instituted an action plan to recruit more English specialists. Sylvie Turcotte, director of the DFTPS, estimates that there are about 650 positions to fill. McGill University and Concordia University are both offering an intensive, five-course professional development program, to be given during the current school year. UQAM is considering setting up a group this summer if there is sufficient demand. Supply teachers in English school boards will also be able to obtain a temporary two-year licence. These measures are necessary until traditional university programs, spread over four years, can meet the demand.

"At the time," explains Voula Plagakis, president of the Regroupement des conseillers et conseillères pédagogiques d'anglais, langue seconde (RCCPALS), "the many ESL education consultants scattered across the province felt a need to consult each other, to discuss and share ideas, and to continue their professional development." Since their creation twenty years ago, RCCPALS, which covers Montréal and the surrounding area, and RREALS (Regroupement des responsables de l'enseignement d'anglais, langue seconde), which covers eastern Québec, have been recognized in the field for their dynamic character.

Each year, the groups organize numerous meetings and training sessions for their members. "It's my fourth year as an education consultant, and I find that the training provided by the association really benefits my practice," says Plagakis. "I can continue my professional development through this group and the network." The two groups also encourage people in the field to innovate, experiment and share their expertise. "To become a member of RREALS, you have to develop a tool," explains Randy Hamlyn, president. "It may be a learning and evaluation situation, a project, an end-of-year exam, etc. This brings in about fifty new productions per year, which are then distributed to school boards and schools who belong to the association." The two groups also produce and distribute important reference documents in the field. For example, RCCPALS helped develop a guide for education consultants, administrators and teachers on how to implement an intensive English program.

While each group is autonomous, they cooperate actively with each other and with other organizations. "We work closely together and with the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport," Hamlyn explains. "The heads of programs and of evaluation show us what's new, ask for our opinion and ask us to validate certain documents. We communicate regularly and share information. In essence, we're a group of friends: we talk to each other and help each other out. It's a very good relationship, and a very stimulating environment!"

To find out more about the activities of RREALS, visit the group's Web site: <**http://station05.qc.ca/partenaires/rreals**>.

You can obtain the *Guide d'implantation en anglais intensif* on the SPEAQ Web site: <**http://speaq.qc.ca/other_fra.html**>.

By Denise Gaudreault

Means Doing Things Differently!

Last year, the administration of Saint-Anselme secondary school (Commission scolaire de la Côte-du-Sud) teamed up with its staff to develop a plan of action with respect to the NANS intervention strategy. At first, the process was intended only for teachers; in the end, however, the experience rallied the entire school team. Thus, the administration found itself with a sizeable working group, made up of some forty teachers and ten resource people involved in school life: the psychoeducator, social worker, guidance counsellor, psychologist, nurse, spiritual life and community involvement animator, library technician, sports and leisure technician and two other educators.

"This participatory process turned out to be effective, productive and, above all, very motivating," said Rodrigue Létourneau, school principal at the time of this exercise in consensus-building, before retiring in July. "I would have liked to work as part of such a team when I was younger. It would have helped me to be a better school principal," he added humbly.

Table Set for Fruitful Dialogue

Saint-Anselme school carried out this project after a careful analysis of its situation. For several years, the administration had been gathering data in order to analyze its practices. The following elements had been observed: insufficient time devoted to homework, drop in motivation, deterioration of academic results, lack of discipline, and more frequent referrals to the reflection room. In addition, the results of a socioeducational environment questionnaire (SEQ) indicated a large discrepancy between the perceptions of the adults and those of the students in terms of the school atmosphere.

When the School Team Does its Homework

At the start of 2004, the school administration therefore had the indicators it needed to develop its NANS plan. To identify the areas of intervention and actions to include in this plan, it opted for a joint decision-making process with its staff. As a realistic measure, it gave the school team time to work together so that they could reflect on what shape the systematic workshops would take. Finally, the administration entrusted resource people from the school team with the task of designing exercises to frame the work.

In the first workshop, participants described what they considered to be the ideal student and the ideal educational intervention. This data was then compiled and shared at the next workshop, to help participants adopt a common vision that would become the basis for their planning. Staff then worked in teams to target areas of intervention for their school for the next three years. By evaluating their strengths and the feasibility of the actions to be carried out, the team members then established a few orientations, as well as two or three objectives for each one. The final exercise consisted in prioritizing the objectives and proposing ways to achieve them.

What began merely as a shared vision of an ideal soon became an opportunity for school-team members to develop orientations, set priorities and choose means of action for the NANS plan for their school.

Two Birds With One Stone

The administration of Saint-Anselme school has learned important lessons from this experience. "I've observed that there is a stronger adherence to activities when the staff has helped develop them. In addition, I've noticed that teachers talk about their projects more at the pedagogical council rather than coming to present them individually to the administration," Létourneau concluded.

The *New Approaches, New Solutions* intervention strategy was set up in 2002 to foster the success of secondary school students in disadvantaged areas. The government is investing $125 million over a five-year period (2002-2007) to this effect. The 195 participating schools share $25 million per year to develop their expertise in intervening in disadvantaged areas.

To find out more about the intervention strategy used at Saint-Anselme secondary school, consult the information sheet "Exemple d'une pratique prometteuse" on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (<**www.mels.gouv.qc.ca**>), under the heading *Agir autrement*.

By Réjane Bougé

AND WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Spreading the Joy of Reading

We all know that reading is an essential ingredient for improving academic success, in all subjects. In this regard, last January, the Ministère tabled an action plan on reading in schools to encourage young people to read, by trying to reach them through various means. Because classrooms sometimes have to go beyond their school walls, the plan involves not only teachers, but also parents and the entire community. The Ministère also announced the injection of significant funds for the purchase of books, spread over three years, to help school librairies meet international standards of 15 to 20 publications per student. The action plan is brimming with novel ideas to better support schools in their endeavors. Thanks to a "toolbox" of resources and reference materials, teachers at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels, as well as the parents, are now better equipped to promote reading. A conference on this action plan will be held this April in Montréal.

Literary Camps

The new measures proposed in this plan include literary camps. Three French-language literary camps were held for the first time in August 2005, one in the Laurentians and two in Estrie. According to Lise Ouellet, who is in charge of the French programs at the Ministère, and Chantal Guérin, in charge of libraries, both participants in the implementation of this initiative, these gatherings of all school stakeholders were quite exceptional. "All the dynamic forces in the world of reading were brought together under one roof," said Guérin. "It's rare for a project to receive such resounding dedication and commitment!" While the goal was to ignite a passion for reading in people who work with young people and to show them how to navigate among the resources that exist, it was also about showing them how to communicate this passion and to help them become competent mediators.

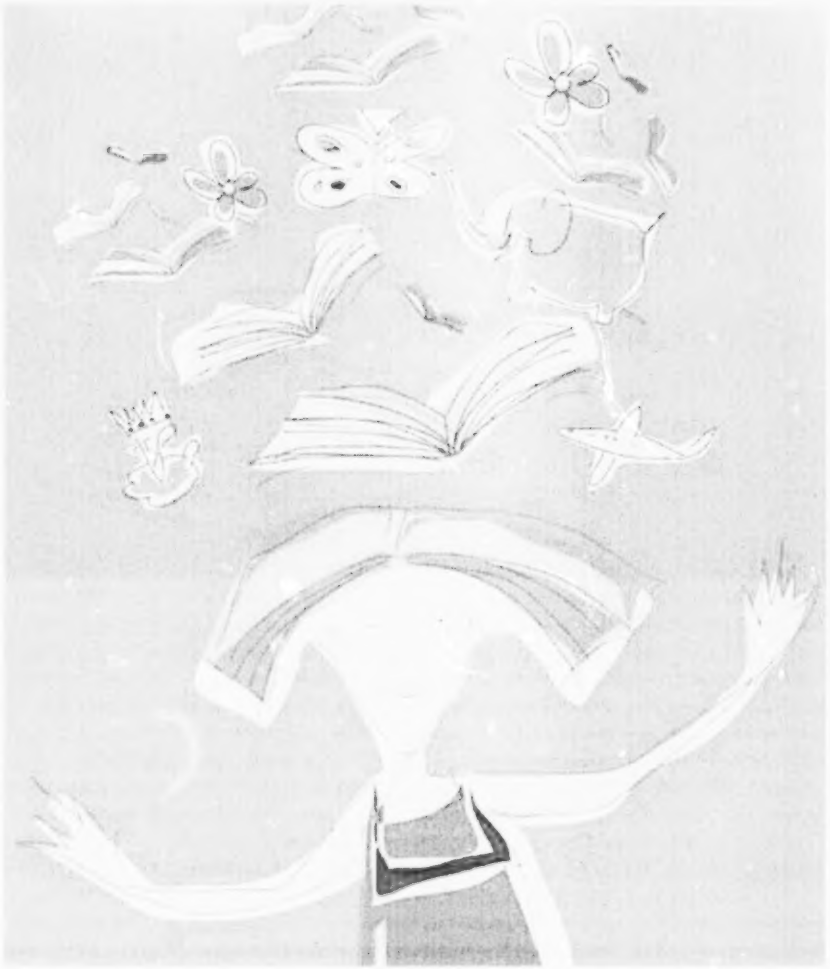
"With more than two hundred people enrolled, these camps were successful beyond all expectations!" said the coordinators. Another important aspect was that this initiative brought together school administrators, education consultants, teachers and librarians. "Golden opportunities such as these don't come along that often," Ouellet said proudly. The project was also developed in partnership with the book

industry: the Grande bibliothèque du Québec lent a few hundred books for consultation, and a team of experts from Livres ouverts (MELS Web site that suggests books for young people) joined the group to guide participants in their book selections.

- Jean-Claude Germain

"Many participants said the literary camp let them relive the happy memories of their childhood," said Marie-Ève Sévigny, who worked on the action plan and, more specifically, on the content of the three days of each of these camps. "Participants were very satisfied with the majority of tools made available to them, but they especially appreciated the logbook they had to write, as well as the video that relayed comments from young readers, expressing their ideas and expectations." The camp animator, who performed as one of the characters in Carlos Ruiz Zafón's novel *Shadow of the Wind*, stimulated the troupes and directed discussions with an anthology of quotes from writers from Québec and elsewhere, including Jean-Claude Germain, Michel Tremblay and a host of others.

Participants also had a chance to meet author and story-teller Jacques Pasquet and poets José Acquelin and Tristan Malavoy-Racine, "to get out of the rut of the novel, a genre which people turn to a bit too automatically," said Guérin. The project took advantage of Les Correspondances d'Eastman, a literary event being held at the same time as the camp, to engage in some of these dialogues. Magazine publishers were also invited, given that magazines can open the doors to a whole new reading adventure for many young people. In fact, participants had only one major criticism: they didn't have enough time to visit all the booths and to… read! Two months later, on October 22, upon the invitation of Lise Bissonnette, participants met at the Grande bibliothèque to assess the concrete results of the training they had received. In other words, these literary camps are not just a one-time project, but part of a sustained desire to continue along new avenues. Next year, other regions will be visited and an English-language camp is also in the works.



One Contest, Lots of Prizes!

The contest entitled *I've got reading on my mind* is another dynamic element stemming from the action plan on reading. It aims to recognize stimulating projects that promote the love of reading, especially among boys. Prizes will be awarded to elementary and secondary students and to educational institutions—including vocational training and adult education centres that cater to young people aged 16 to 18. In both categories, prizes will go to original initiatives that are able to win over reluctant readers. Particular attention will be paid to projects that touch on several subjects. For schools, projects must have as their goal encouraging boys to read. For student projects, which can be submitted by individual students or by groups of students, it is important that the students be the ones carrying out the project, although support from school staff to develop the project is permitted.

In each category, students and schools, there will be cash prizes, suitcases of books and a host of other attractive items awarded. Eligible projects may be completed or in progress—but they must be submitted by January 31, 2006. So there's still a bit of time for you to think about it! Brochures with contest details have been available since October. With a bit of imagination, we will all have reading on our minds!

Contest registration forms can be found on the Web site: **<www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lecture>**

You Are What You Read

"Tell me what you read, and I will tell you who you are." Lorraine Lahaie, education consultant and coordinator of elementary school libraries for the Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin, is a firm believer in this saying. As her calling card during her stay at the Manoir des sables camp in Estrie, she had brought the novel *The Sun of the Scortas*, by Laurent Gaudé, winner of the Goncourt prize. She wanted to share the happiness this book had brought her. "What a marvellous idea to introduce yourself to others through one of your favourite books! From my first contact with the other participants, it was magical." She found all her discussions rich and enduring. "Motivated people grouped together in a charming environment and within an innovative framework—what more could you ask for? The workshops were substantial without being too heavy. I came away with tools that I could apply."

Two of the workshops Lahaie enjoyed the most were one in which participants learned how to use magazines in class, and another on fairy tales, given by Denise Fortin. "It was fantastic to see how we can use this very specific genre. Ms. Fortin helped us become familiar with these books." She also liked the show in Eastman, a reading of letters between Dr. Ferron and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu. "Overall, it was fabulously organized. There were so many enchanting details. For example, each room was named after a writer. I was matched with Anne Hébert, and provided with all kinds of information about her."

For Lahaie, the camp was an excellent catalyst. Energized by these contacts with various people from the Ministère, she returned to her workplace with the firm intention of making use of these new ideas. She was particularly inspired by the work she witnessed with magazines. And she has been thinking a lot about parent volunteers involved in the libraries. "They too deserve better tools to communicate their passion for reading," she said. "It's a shame that more time isn't devoted to literature during teacher training. Teachers need to be made aware of its importance. If I've understood one thing, it's that we need to show our teachers the value of free time for reading in class," Lahaie concluded.

Reading Circles

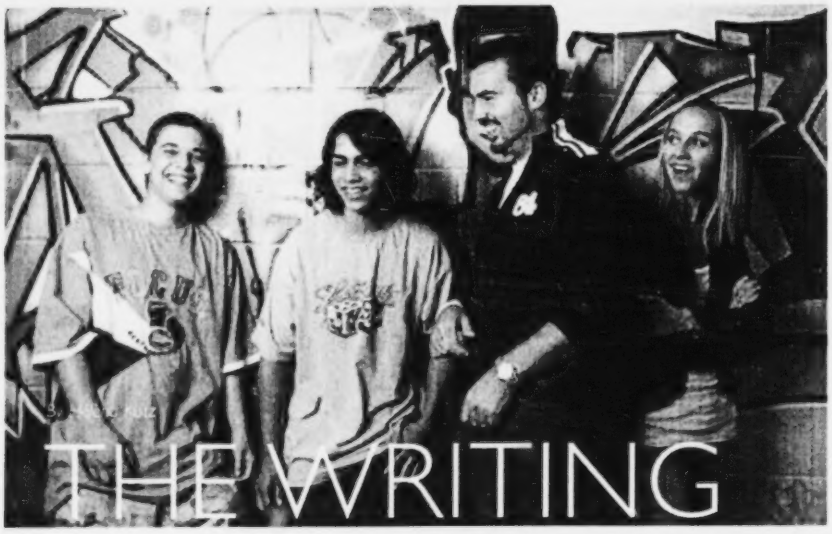
Julie Lupien teaches Secondary Cycle One French at Chêne-Bleu school in Pincourt, in a preparatory class. She is very familiar with the enjoyment of shared reading in class. "When I stop reading the book I've chosen to read each day—currently, *Un hiver de tourmente*, by Dominique Demers—my students demand to know the rest of the story!" Because she's always keeping an eye out for new ways of doing things, Lupien enrolled in a literary camp, bringing *Chercher le vent*, by Guillaume Vigneault, as her calling card. She recommends the literary camp experience to all her colleagues. From the mental imagery conjured up by fairy tales to the cognitive abilities they refine, the new notions learned energized this young teacher. "I became more acutely aware of the importance of reading for a person's development." She has now decided to set up reading circles. How is she preparing? By reading, of course! The first circle was to begin in mid-October, within her preparatory class. This demonstrates that the tools presented at the camp can also be adapted to students with special needs. As well, Chêne-Bleu has a particular situation when it comes to its library, since the library of the city of Pincourt is located within the school. "This gives us access to a lot of books, but there aren't as many reference books adapted to the needs of our students." Lupien therefore intends to make sure that the funds invested by the Ministère under the action plan on reading are used to purchase more books adapted to this clientele.

Competent Readers and Mediators

What is a competent reader? "A reader who truly enjoys reading, who has developed solid reading habits, who understands the structure of a book, who is curious and who always finds time to read." What is a competent mediator? "A reader who understands the person standing before him, who does not impose his own choices, who shares reading with his students, who is able to talk about his passion—and who always carries a book with him!" These are the principles that Carmen Picard and her fellow participants came away with from their literary camp. In charge of welcoming immigrants and supporting their learning of French at the Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin, Picard has particular needs. "Books suited to my clientele must be very visual, and use simple language. If they're culturally diverse, that's even better!" says this education consultant. People immigrating to this region come mostly from Afghanistan, eastern European countries and Columbia, which explains her desire to vary the reading contexts. "The collegiality at the camp was very stimulating. I had many rich discussions with librarians, science teachers and school principals." Picard admits to having been somewhat neglectful of her duties, having spent her evenings reading. But her research was fruitful. "The selection of books was plentiful and varied. I wrote down the names of lots of books on interesting topics."

For a more detailed overview of her discoveries, you can consult her suggestions for books, stories and magazines on the Web site <**http://educ.csmv.qc.ca/sre/sasaf/index.html**>.

Until the next camp, Picard is preciously guarding the logbook she kept last August. "Reading is a marvellously cross-curricular competency," she added, laughing.



THE WRITING ON THE WALL

It was part of a new project at the Greenfield Park school to stem the tide of vandalism and graffiti around the school and on businesses and stop signs in the community. Spiritual animator David Dupont wanted to give students a safe environment in which to express themselves. It would offer them a positive outlet for their talents, art teacher Véronique St-Cyr explains. "We wanted to show artists and the community that they don't have to do illegal pieces to be recognized. We showed them options of using graffiti as an art form."

With the help of a grant from the Riverside School Board's ArtsSmarts program, Centennial hired Léandre to show the nine students who were members of The Crew how to properly plan and create murals as well as teach them painting techniques. He uses graffiti as part of his graphic design work.

Students tried their hand at painting a mural in Dupont's office. Afterwards, Léandre had students write two rap songs and then worked with The Crew to put it to paint along a 15-metre stretch of wall in a hallway. "You gotta watch your step, think things through. You gotta follow your dream, make them come true," the song begins.

The song and the mural are about a successful athlete making a bad decision and getting mixed up with drugs and the wrong crowd. One image depicts a healthy teenager in a bright yellow Centennial Chargers uniform, while another at the end shows a gaunt youth.

Brainstorming for it began in January 2005 and participants spent four weeks during May and June painting the mural. "Graffiti can be vandalism but it is an art that students are fantastic at," Dupont says. "It gives me goose bumps to see them work."

The participating students last year would miss the final period of class once a week and continue to work long after school was out for the day. Darryl Stevens, 16, would take a weekly 45-60 minute bus ride from the Alternate School, where he was enrolled, to participate in Centennial's graffiti project. "It gave me a place to do it in a good way," he says. The commute is significantly shorter for him this year; he transferred to Centennial Regional High School in September.

Eric Sullivan, 16, says Léandre showed them such techniques as shading as well as which colours work well together. They also learned about how to plan their designs before painting them, not something Stevens was used to doing. "It used to be: 'I have cans, let's go paint!'" he recalls. "It was part of my routine." Not any more. Centennial's program has given him a legitimate space to express his art. "I haven't done any illegal graffiti for a long time," he says.

Artist Léandre proved to be a good role model of someone who is using his graffiti skills to earn a living. Stevens and Sullivan hope to become graphic artists later on. In the meantime, the two members of The Crew have lots of work ahead of them.

St-Cyr says teachers have been approaching her about having them paint panels and chairs in their classrooms. There are also two panels to paint in the student lounge and a parent has commissioned them to paint a 15-metre fence along the bike path in St. Hubert. They will have help from the 14 students who are enrolled in The Crew this year.

By Hélène Katz

STUDIO KALEIDOSCOPE

For more than 15 years students had been using the room to perform such routine tasks as stuffing plastic cutlery into bags for a local cutlery company. However, when the cutlery company began contracting out the job to the Far East, REACH's staff put their heads together. They wanted to find a new vocation for their workshop that would be creative, productive, economically sustainable and offer students transferable skills they could use after they graduate.

"The biggest challenge was deciding what we wanted to do," principal Caryn Shacter recalls. "Then it all made sense." Studio Kaleidoscope was born in January 2003 with funding from ArtSmarts. This program of the Riverside School Board encourages an arts-inspired curriculum in schools in collaboration with artists in the community. This six-year project began in 2000 with the support of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Artist Tatiana Iliina Gooden lent her creative talents to Studio Kaleidoscope, which brings together about 25 students ages 16-21. She came weekly during the first year to teach the students and train the teacher in the art of creating mosaic tiles. Now, Shacter and a group of volunteers work with students in the studio on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

They learned to sort, glue, cut, grout, paint tiles and create a mosaic. They made butterflies during the first year. Now they've expanded to produce picture frames, coasters, tabletops, inukshuks and stones for the garden. Their work is sold at craft fairs and on consignment at Au Salon des metiers d'Emma in Chambly. Two years ago, students made seven inukshuks for the school's garden. Six of them represent each of REACH's six classes and one represents the community.

Students have a choice of tasks to perform and are matched according to their interest and ability. Even those with the most severe disabilities can participate. "All the kids love it," Shacter says. "Even the kids who can't talk can cut tiles and glue. It shows what they can do, instead of what they can't do."

Some are good at working with glue, while others are adept at grouting. "You can get just about any kid to do anything," she explains. "We had kids who couldn't sort two different colours and are now sorting tiles."

Despite being located inside a school, the program is run like a business. "We don't have recess, we have a break. We're not a teacher, we're a boss or a manager," Shacter says. A sign on the door of the studio lists the names of the "employees" and a tab indicates whether they are "in" or "out." A notice below it says: "Work starts at 9:15 a.m."

There's more to their "job" than production. They help publicize the program, sell their work at craft fairs and calculate how much money was spent on production versus how much revenue was generated through sales. "It's cross curriculum," Shacter says, leaning back against a worktable inside the studio. "Whatever we do is in project form. We've been doing it for years."

Students spend September to November building up stock before hitting the busy season of Christmas crafts sales. Shacter dreams of taking the program further. "We want to sell things and be on equal footing with things made by people who aren't disabled," she says. "Our goal is to get kids out of the building and into the community at large. This is one way to do it."

By Marie-Hélène Gauthier

LANAUDIÈRE TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD

Students from 13 classes at Lanaudière elementary school, of the Commission scolaire de Montréal, took their community on a trip around the world, by means of four arts disciplines: visual arts, drama, music, and folk dancing.

"Each class began by choosing a country," explained Julie Duchesne, school principal. "The students studied the country's characteristics, and then received 12 hours of training in folk dancing. Steve Durepos, the project coordinator, was in charge of this aspect. Dance was our anchor point, from which we built a space for artistic and cultural development." (Students at Lanaudière school study dance throughout Cycle One.)

The other arts followed naturally, adding to the project. "The idea behind the show was to act as if the children's presentations were intended for the parents—as if the students had gone on a trip and were sending news back home," said Duchesne.

The entire team of specialists got involved in the project. Education consultant Lucie Paré, a member of the coordinating team, addressed some of the themes with the various classes. With the support of the visual arts teacher, Annie Fugère, the students created the sets for each scene. Solange Magistry, the music teacher, helped students accompany the soundtracks for the choreographies by playing the recorder or percussion instruments. Then, working with Louise Delières, the drama teacher, and Catherine Larivain, a filmmaker, students produced short film capsules. "Between each of the segments, a short film was projected. For example, if the next dance came from China, the capsule introduced one of our students of Chinese origin who spoke about his country, its traditions, etc.," Duchesne explained. A remarkable aspect of this large-scale project was the involvement of the community. "The project really rallied people together. Parents got very involved. For example, a team of 12 parents made the 115 costumes!"

In May, the students presented their show at the auditorium of Le Plateau school, not far from their own. "I think the learning our students acquire in carrying out this kind of project is multi-faceted. They were able to see, in concrete terms, the connections between the different arts disciplines. They took into account the whole discipline, with all the rigour required by such a project. They demonstrated creativity, an openness to different cultures, and tolerance. They learned how to truly cooperate, and how to master their nervousness. But what struck me the most was the feeling of belonging they developed in relation to each other," Duchesne concluded.

By Francine Gagnon-Bourget

Last spring, preliminary versions of the drama, visual arts, dance and music programs of studies for Secondary Cycle Two were presented to the Commission des programmes d'études and various partners. This validation process led to the collection of comments and suggestions that should enrich these programs while ensuring their coherence and pertinence for the school community.

To read this article, download the electronic version of the magazine *Art et culture à l'école* (in French only): **<www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dgfj/projets/culture/artetculture.htm>**.

By Eve Krakow

The diversification of paths in secondary school aims primarily to increase student motivation and decrease the student drop-out rate. This structure recognizes that, because students are not all the same, a variety of paths are needed to respect their diversity. Data from the OECD show that school motivation problems tend to exist in countries where general education programs prevail. Several provinces and countries have therefore tried to make their educational structures more flexible by offering "à la carte" options that enable students to find meaning in their studies and to decrease the time they spend wandering through the school system.

For the most part, the General Education Path and the Applied General Education Path offer the same subjects: language of instruction, second language, Mathematics, History and Citizenship Education, Contemporary Economic Environment, one of four arts subjects (Drama, Visual Arts, Dance or Music), Physical Education and Health, Ethics and Religious Culture, and an integrative project in Secondary V. However, the Applied General Education Path differs from the General Education Path with its two compulsory programs of studies: the Personal Orientation Project and Applied Science and Technology.

To choose between the two paths, students will refer to their competency report at the end of Secondary Cycle One, as well as what they will have discovered about themselves and the school system through the guidance-oriented approach to learning.

Students may switch paths each year, without falling behind or compromising their certification. Provisions have been made to ensure that students can move easily from one path to another, should their needs or interests change. Both paths lead to a Secondary School Diploma and enable students to continue on to either college education or vocational training.

For students who finish Secondary Cycle One without having met the required expectations in language and mathematics, a Work-Oriented Training Path will be offered. This path will give students who have difficulty at school access to a renewed educational path leading to employment and a qualification. It includes a general education component and an on-the-job training component, providing either preparation for employment or training for semiskilled occupations.

The diversification of paths in secondary school aims primarily to increase student motivation and decrease the student drop-out rate.

Applied General Education

To develop the Applied General Education Path, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport studied the foundations and organizational structure of education systems in other countries as well as numerous reports and studies, including those of the Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation. These documents repeatedly referred to the "royal path" that leads to academic and career choices by default: students end up following a given academic or career path through a process of elimination rather than as a result of a deliberate decision. The need for better academic and vocational information was also frequently highlighted, and specific requests were made by young people at the Sommet québécois de la jeunesse. Finally, a report on technological paths showed positive effects on school performance, student attendance and the retention rate.

Students who choose the Applied General Education Path will engage in a personal process of career exploration, through the Personal Orientation Project, and will follow a more hands-on approach to science and technology, through the Applied Science and Technology program. As well, various exploratory options based on new electives in the arts, as well as more specific electives such as Exploration of Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship, will broaden the menu of options offered to students.

Personal Orientation Project

The Personal Orientation Project (POP) will enable students to develop two competencies: *Carries out a process of career exploration*, and *Contemplates his/her learning and work orientations*.* Through simulations and practical exercises, students will become familiar with the various work tasks related to different fields of interest. Helped by their teacher, each student will create and carry out his or her own process of career exploration.

Thus, a student may explore a single sector for several months, or explore several different ones. After each exploration, students will share with their peers and their teacher their process, discoveries and reflections. Because students will all be exploring different sectors, it is hoped they will learn from each other's experiences, and their learning will become exponential. The POP is special in that it gives the students the central role, allowing them to explore various fields that interest them and to test their choices by trying out work functions. It allows them to continue constructing their career identities through exploration on their own terms, and thus enables them to acquire the tools they need to enrich their identities throughout their lives.

Carole Viel, in charge of the POP, explains that a Web site designed specifically for the program will provide a vast digital directory, serving as a virtual library of learning materials. These will include experimentation tools, virtual visits of companies or educational institutions, testimonials from workers, links to resource people and methodological tools. Viel gives the example of one experimentation tool associated with the arts sector. Using a computer program and incorporating interior decorating and design principles, students redecorate a fictitious bedroom. "If, after a certain number of hours exploring this activity sector, the student decides this is something that interests him, he can then go on a virtual visit of a vocational centre offering a related program, listen to testimonial from an entrepreneur who started her own business, etc. Or, if after a few hours, the student decides to abandon this sector, he will have to figure out why he doesn't like it and what he has learned about himself in trying it out."

A working draft of the POP program will be distributed to education partners and undergo validation in December 2005. The program is currently being field-tested in four French schools in different school boards. As well, the Direction de la recherche, des statistiques et des indicateurs (DRSI) of the MELS is carrying out a comparative study, using focus groups, to determine the effects of the POP on students and conditions for successful implementation.

POP and the Guidance-Oriented Approach

Richard Leblanc is coordinator for complementary educational services at the MELS. He and Carole Viel emphasize that while the POP is in keeping with the guidance-

* Exact wording still to be finalized

oriented approach to learning (GOAL), it does not replace it. In fact, the POP needs GOAL in order to function properly.

As stated in the MELS information document *Making Dreams Come True*, GOAL is "a concerted approach by a school team and its partners, in which objectives are set and services (individual and collective), tools and pedagogical activities implemented to guide students in their identity development and career planning. These activities and services are integrated into the school's success plan and its educational project. [...] A guidance-oriented approach is not added on to the school's objectives or learning activities, but rather integrated with the regular activities."*

Leblanc explains that GOAL does not just involve learning about trades and professions and their prerequisites; it's also about discovering one's talents, strengths, limits and aptitudes. This can be achieved through learning situations in the classroom, particularly when teachers wish to incorporate the broad area of learning *Personal and Career Planning* into their pedagogical practices. For example, in carrying out a geography project, a student may discover that he's good at coordinating a team, or better at conducting research than at performing manual tasks. "A teacher who is aware of the guidance-oriented approach can question students and draw their attention to these qualities."

The guidance-oriented approach can also be implemented though complementary educational services activities, outside formal instruction. For example, supported by a guidance counsellor, school staff might work with community partners, parents, and the students themselves to set up a Career Week. Or, in collaboration with the psychologist, the spiritual care and guidance animator might lead a group of "peer helpers" to help students discover what qualities are needed to help other people. Guidance counsellors and other professionals specializing in educational and vocational information should continue to offer one-on-one support to students, as needed. They may also make suggestions to their teaching colleagues on how to enhance the guidance process for students, while respecting each person's specific qualifications.

Fitting into this continuum, the POP is a program that will enable students to go a step further, by undertaking a structured, individualized process to learn more about their own aptitudes and about specific fields and careers.

"The POP needs GOAL as a foundation," Viel emphasizes. "By the time students get to Secondary Cycle Two, they must have already developed a personal frame of reference, to have achieved a certain level of self-knowledge, in order to be able to articulate the projects they wish to carry out."

Leblanc and Viel note that professional development offered by the MELS will combine the POP and GOAL, in order to consolidate these links. Training sessions will be offered in English as well. Barbara Goode, English-sector coordinator for this dossier at the Direction des politiques et des projects, Services à la communauté anglophone (SCA-DPP), notes that the Ministère has also hired two professionals to develop and promote this dossier in the English sector: Cheryl Pratt, for POP, and Sandra Salesas, for GOAL.

Work-Oriented Training Path

The Work-Oriented Training Path is comprised of two programs: preparation for employment and training for semiskilled occupations.

A student who is at least 15 years of age on September 30 of the school year may enroll in the Work-Oriented Training Path if the student's competency report or individualized education plan shows that, of all the training paths offered at the secondary level, this path is the most likely to meet the student's interests, needs and abilities. "The decision to direct a student toward one or another program should not be automatic; rather, it should be based on an evaluation of that student's particular situation and constitute the best choice for fostering his or her success," explains Hélène Poliquin-Verville, from the Direction de l'adaptation scolaire.

Preparation for employment is a three-year program intended for students who have not achieved the objectives of the elementary level programs of studies for language of instruction and mathematics. The program contains a general education component (language of instruction; second language; Mathematics; Technological and Scientific Experimentation; Geography, History and Citizenship Education; Physical Education and Health; and Autonomy and Social Participation) and a practical training component (Introduction to the World of Work, World of Work Orientation, and Work Skills).

The first year takes place in school, while the following two years follow a work-study approach. The Work Skills course (300 hours in the second year and 600 hours in the third year) consists primarily of practicums in the workplace. "In this training, students will develop work competencies that will enable them to be flexible and take on various job functions," explains Poliquin-Verville. "They develop basic competencies, but in several work sectors. This program prepares students for work in general."

Training for semiskilled occupations is intended for students who have achieved the objectives of the elementary level programs of studies for language of instruction and mathematics, but have not earned the Secondary Cycle One credits in these subjects. This is a one-year program that includes language of instruction, second language, Mathematics, Introduction to the World of Work, and 375 hours of preparation for a specific semiskilled trade. "Students learn all the work tasks associated with that trade. The competencies are more complex but are all related to a single trade."

The Work-Oriented Training Path replaces the Individualized Paths for Learning and Life Skills and Work Skills Education as well as the Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE). "In developing the Work-Oriented Training Path, we did not reject everything that existed before," Poliquin-Verville emphasizes. "We based this training on best practices drawn from schools across Québec." She and her colleagues also took into account the results of an evaluation conducted in 2002 on the existing programs, which commended the work-study approach but underlined weaknesses in terms of general education. Many parents and educators felt this type of training was a dead-end for students.

The new path still places heavy emphasis on work practicums, but the general education component has been "beefed up." New

* Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation, *Making Dreams Come True: Achieving Success Through the Guidance-Oriented Approach*. (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002), 18.

programs of studies will be offered. They aim to develop the same competencies as the General Education Path, but contain elements that have been strategically chosen to cater to the needs of students seeking earlier social and vocational integration.

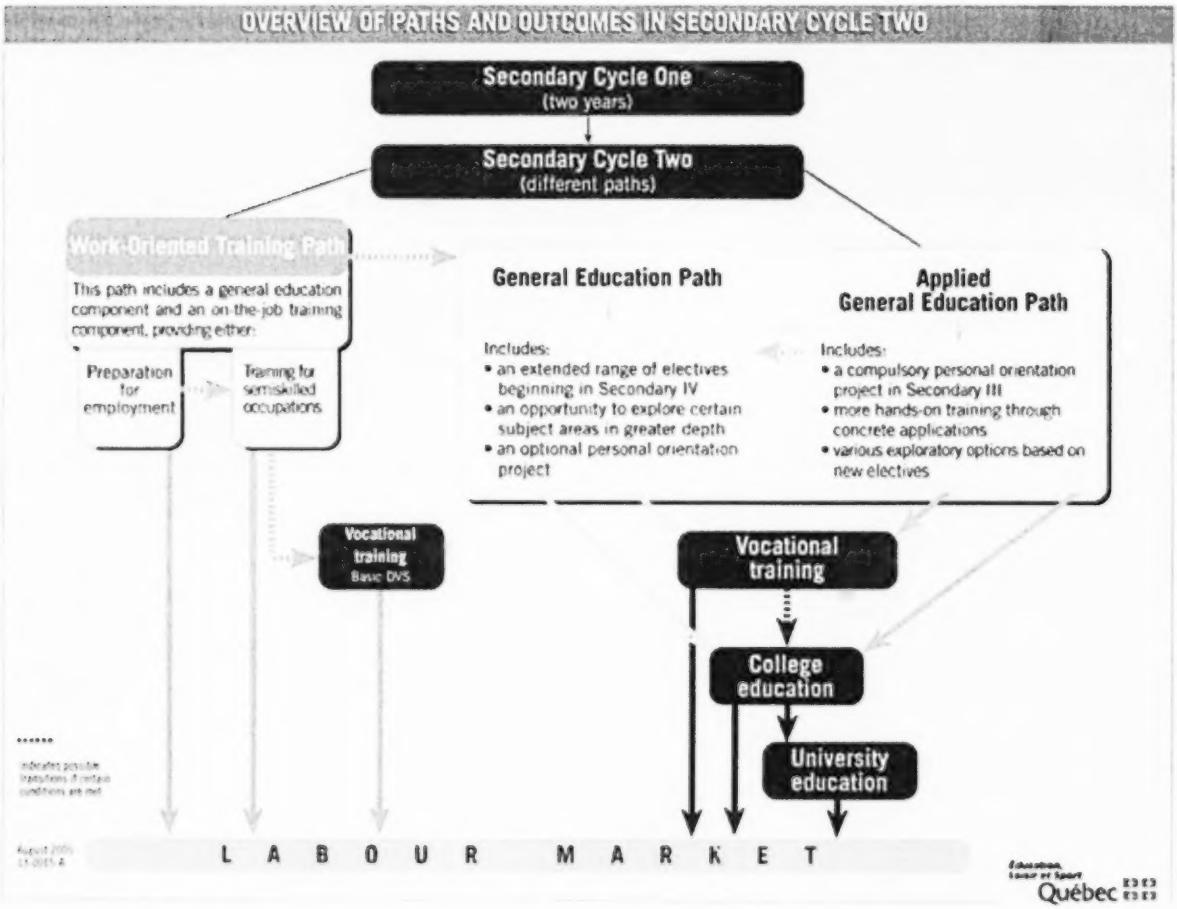
Finally, provisions have been made to ensure bridges from one path to another. A student who progresses well in the first two years of preparation for employment, for example, may be eligible to study a semiskilled trade in his or her third year. Students who complete their training for a semiskilled occupation will be eligible to enroll in some programs leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), subject to certain conditions. Or, a student who meets certain conditions may switch back into the General Education Path (or Applied General Education Path) in Secondary III.

Regardless of which path students choose, they will have the opportunity to develop all the subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies required to deal with the various situations they will face, now and in the future, as students, citizens and workers. "Through learning situations based on real life, and with the support and guidance of their teachers, students will learn to draw on resources from all subjects to answer the various questions relating to their health and well-being, personal and career planning, environmental awareness and consumers rights and responsibilities, citizenship and community life, and media literacy."

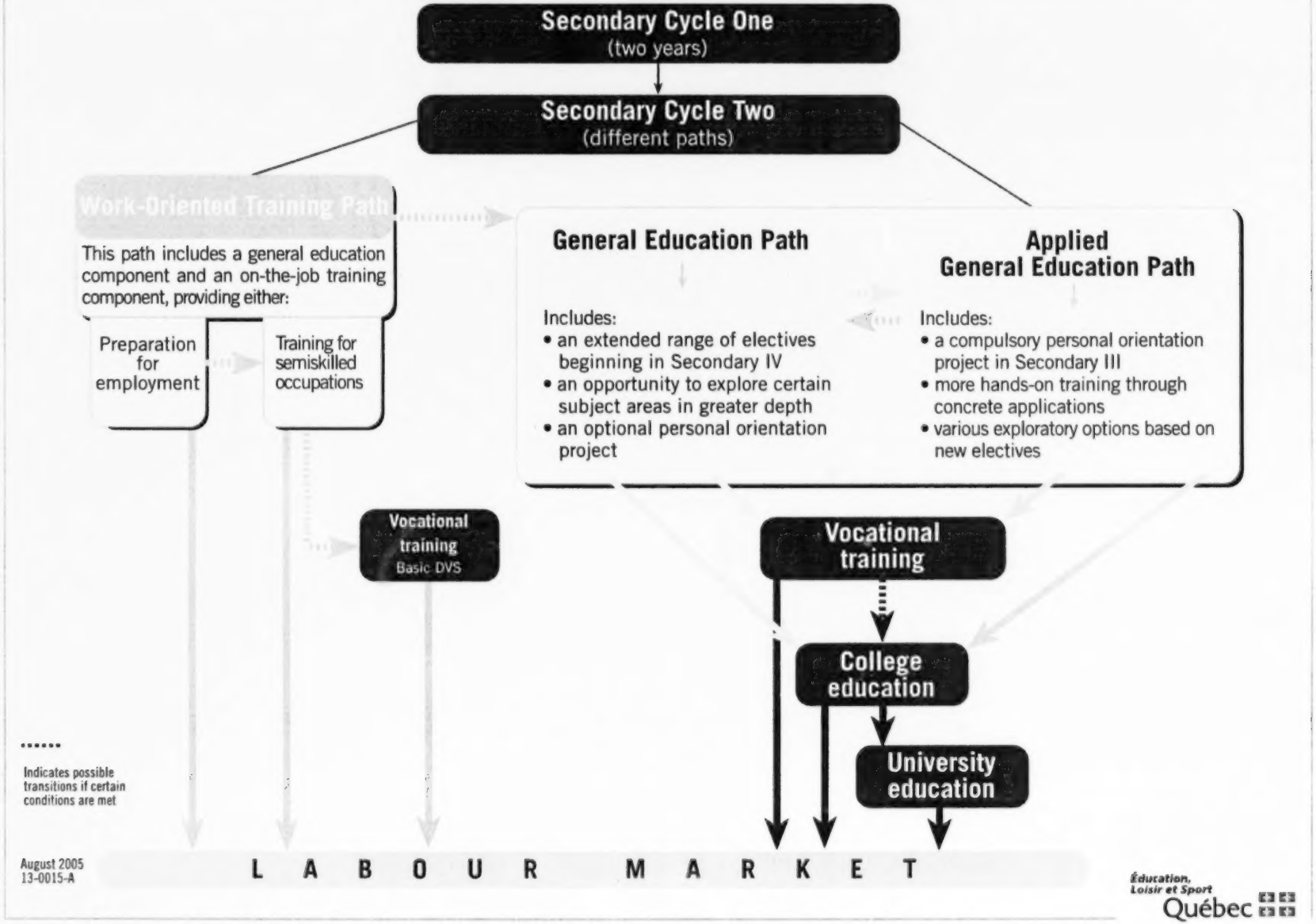
Hélène Pelletier Baillargeon
Director of Programs (1969)

To view the tables of subject-time allocations for each of these paths, consult the *Regulation to amend the Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education* by going to:

<www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lancement/reglement_regped/regped_PPS_a.pdf>.


OVERVIEW OF PATHS AND OUTCOMES IN SECONDARY CYCLE TWO
Secondary Cycle One
(two years)
Secondary Cycle Two
(different paths)
Work-Oriented Training Path
This path includes a general education component and an on-the-job training component, providing either:
Preparation for employment
Training for semiskilled occupations
General Education Path
Includes:
• an extended range of electives beginning in Secondary IV
• an opportunity to explore certain subject areas in greater depth
• an optional personal orientation project
Applied General Education Path
Includes:
• a compulsory personal orientation project in Secondary III
• more hands-on training through concrete applications
• various exploratory options based on new electives
Vocational training
Basic DVS
Vocational training
College education
University education
indicates possible transitions if certain conditions are met
August 2005
L A B O U R M A R K E T
Québec

OVERVIEW OF PATHS AND OUTCOMES IN SECONDARY CYCLE TWO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August 2005
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Éducation, Loisir et Sport
Québec

QEP for Secondary Cycle Two: When will the programs be ready?

Development of the Québec Education Program (QEP) for Secondary Cycle Two is well underway. Marthe Van Neste, publishing coordinator, explains that writing, translation, validation and approval for the General Education Path and the Applied General Education Path is taking place in three phases.

Phase 1 covers the three introductory chapters of the QEP as well the basic subjects that are in continuity with Secondary Cycle One. This part of the QEP was validated by partner organizations in spring 2005, and work is continuing so that ministerial approval can be obtained by March 2006.

Phase 2 involves the courses which, by virtue of the Basic school regulation, are entirely new. This part of the QEP has been submitted to MELS partners for validation, and should be approved by the Minister in June.

"We feel it's important for schools to have access to these programs as soon as possible," says Van Neste. "As soon as we receive ministerial approval, we will place these programs on a reserved Web site for the education community." This part of the QEP will then undergo graphic treatment and linguistic revision, before being published in print form at the end of November 2006.

The following table presents the details of these first two phases.

Phases 1 and 2 of the Québec Education Program's development

Secondary Cycle Two

	Program section	Cycle years	Publication
Phase 1 writing, translation, validation and ministerial approval	• Introductory chapters: 1,2,3	1-2-3	• Approved version on reserved site: **June-August 2006** • Print version and publication on official site: **November-December 2006**
	• Français, langue d'enseignement	1-2	
	• English Language Arts	1-2-3	
	• English, second language	1-2-3	
	• Français, langue seconde	1-2-3	
	• Intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale	Both secondary cycles	
	• Mathematics	1-2-3	
	• History and Citizenship Education	1-2	
	• Physical Education and Health	1-2-3	
Phase 2 writing, translation, validation and ministerial approval	• Spanish, third language	1-2-3	• Approved version on reserved site: **September 2006** • Print version and publication on official site: **November-December 2006**
	• Science and Technology	1-2	
	• Applied Science and Technology	1-2	
	• Arts and electives	1-2-3	
	• Ethics and Religious Culture	2-3	
	• Personal Orientation Project	1 or 2 or 3	

Phase 3 is planned for 2007-2008. In addition to chapter 4, entitled *The Subject Areas*, it includes two programs of studies for Secondary IV (Exploration of Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship), as well as those specific to Secondary V (the integrative project, Contemporary Economic Environment, English Language Arts and Français, langue d'enseignement). These new programs should be distributed to schools in June 2008.

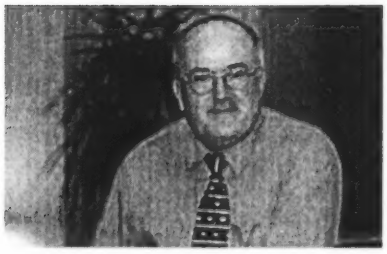
Liette Michaud-Hedge, Director of the Direction de la production en langue anglaise, says her department has been working arduously to translate the working versions of the programs, and is translating the revised versions as they come in, to ensure that the English QEP is available at the same time as the French. As for all pedagogical documents, the English versions of programs are also validated by specialists in the field.

By Marie Hélène Giguère

The Ethics and Religious Culture Program:

In effect, we are laying the last brick of the Quiet Revolution," says Denis Watters, coordinator of the writing teams for the Ethics and Religious Culture Program at the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. "The time has come to bring young people together at one table, whether they are religious or not, to discuss issues and different world views."

Denis Watters, coordinator of the writing teams for the Ethics and Religious Culture Program at the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.



Ethics Education

The ethics education contained in the new program aims to develop students' critical thinking skills by having them reflect on values, social prescriptions, etc. "This aspect of the student's education is closely linked to the broad area of learning *Citizenship and Community Life*," says Watters.

At the elementary level, students will carry out this reflection based on their experiences with their family, friends, in the classroom and at school in general. They will interact with others to enrich their view of the world and humanity using immediate realities as a basis.

At the secondary level, students will ponder increasingly complex questions that go beyond their immediate reality. They will become aware of diverse views of the world and humanity down through the ages or in various cultures and will reflect on their own view of humanity. Students will analyze ethical issues, pondering the desirable action to take in a given situation in light of a set of references taken from their research and their common reflection.*

Religious Culture Education

"The section of the program reserved for religious culture is much more than a simple course on the religious fact. It is not at all catechism, but rather, a study and reflection on religious themes, such as dietary practices, religious holidays, etc. There will, of course, be an emphasis on Christianity since it is tied to the history and evolution of Québec," Watters explains. A large part of this education will also be devoted to developing students' ability to position themselves with respect to religions and new religious movements.

At the elementary level, students will discover the principal characteristics of different religious traditions and what they have in common, based on elements which students can detect in their immediate environment: places of worship, clothing, common expressions, rites, and so on.

At the secondary level, students will analyze common and specific aspects of different religious traditions, based on the realities of Québec society and those of societies around the world. They will learn to recognize that religions propose views of life that are worthy of respect and give meaning to existence, suffering and death.

The new ethics and religious culture program centres around young people's search for meaning. "Efforts should be directed toward recognizing others and respecting their convictions, and toward dialogue," Watters concludes.

Professional Development

Donald Guertin, in charge of the committee planning professional development for the new Ethics and Religious Culture Program, is about to begin a tour across Québec to give a one-day training session at each regional office. School boards will, of course, be invited to participate. Beginning in February, this tour will bring together professionals from the Secrétariat aux affaires religieuses, the Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire, and the Direction des programmes, who will present the new program to schools and school boards.

* *Establishment of an ethics and religious culture program: Providing future direction for all Québec youth.* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2005), 7.

By Eve Krakow

Two new English-language videos dealing with individualized education plans (IEPs) and best practices in *New Approaches, New Solutions* (NANS) schools are now available for use by secondary school teams.

"An IEP is a plan that is put into place for a student with a learning or behavioural difficulty," says Julie Hobbs, assistant director general for Riverside School Board. "It's an opportunity for all the people involved to meet and discuss what works best for that particular student."

So begins "Beyond the IEP: Opening All Doors to Success," a new video co-produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

The 56-minute video is designed to give school teams a better understanding of how to build and use IEPs to help their students. Through visits to schools and interviews with principals, teachers, education consultants, parents and the students themselves, it provides explanations and demonstrates some of the strategies implemented by schools across the province.

The project comes under the umbrella of *Opening All the Doors to Success*, a ministerial strategy to encourage school partners to reflect on the types of intervention and services to implement in order to foster the success of all students—especially those who encounter difficulties at some point during their schooling.

Diane Shank, education specialist at the MELS, worked closely with Georgette Goupil, a professor at UQAM, to produce the video. "We wanted to see how IEPs are being dealt with at the secondary school level," she explains. So they visited Bonaventure Polyvalent School, the province's smallest English-speaking secondary school, located in the Gaspé; Heritage High School in Saint-Hubert, which has over 1 700 students; James Lyng High School, an inner-city school in Montreal; Pontiac High School, a rural school in the Outaouais region; and Chambly Academy, in Saint-Lambert.

Interviewees talk about the challenge of finding time for all participants in the IEP process to meet, the importance of involving parents, and the need to empower students so that they can become agents of their own learning. They share the systems they have set up in their own schools to address these issues, as well as the positive outcomes on student motivation and achievement.

"The video will be used as a tool to stimulate reflection on IEPs and to develop best practices in secondary school," says Shank. "It will come with a guide for structuring group discussions among professionals, to help them figure out how they can apply what they see in the video to their own school environment." All English secondary schools will receive a copy, in either DVD or VHS format.

What Shank likes about the video is that it's a practical tool with a long shelf-life. "There are a lot of changes coming, and a lot of people retiring. But this is a concrete tool that will stay in the school, and can be viewed again and again. It should be relevant for many years to come."

The video was launched at the November 17, 2005, pre-conference to the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) convention.

New Approaches, New Solutions

In filming for the IEP video, Shank and Goupil generated some 25 hours of footage. Editing the film down to under an hour therefore meant cutting out a lot of good material—much of it dealing with best practices. That's when Paule Langevin-Brosseau, in charge of the NANS dossier at the time, had the idea of using this footage to make a DVD to share these practices with teachers.

NANS, or *New Approaches, New Solutions*, is an intervention strategy intended to help secondary schools in disadvantaged communities. Its goals are to increase student motivation, reduce the drop-out rate and improve the student success rate.

To produce this second video, some of the school principals were called back for more interviews. The final version, a 75-minute DVD to be launched at a later date, is entitled "Best Practices for School Success: Four Principals Share Their Views." It features interviews with principals at Pontiac High School, Bonaventure Polyvalent, James Lyng High School and Laurentian Regional High School.

The DVD will be used in NANS schools and workshops to discuss and help school teams implement best practices. And because these practices are applicable to all schools, all English secondary schools will receive a copy, notes Louise Marzinotto, education specialist, who is now in charge of the NANS dossier at the MELS.

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